

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PK, MV

SUBJECT: MALDIVIAN VICE PRESIDENT VISITS PAKISTAN

1. MALDIVES VICE PRESIDENT AMIR ABDUL SATTAR PAID OFFICIAL VISIT TO PAKISTAN JUNE 25-30, FIRST SENIOR MALDIVIAN OFFICIAL TO COME TO THIS COUNTRY. SATTAR CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO, MINISTER OF STATE AZIZ AHMED, AND FINANCE MINISTER HANIF, AND GENERALLY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN WARM RECEPTION BY GOP. VISIT GOT GOOD PRESS PLAY, INCLUDING FRONT PAGE PICTURES OF SESSION WITH BHUTTO AND (FOR THE IGNORANT) DESCRIPTION OF MALDIVES AND THEIR ISLAMIC PEOPLE.

2. MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) HAYAT MEHDI TOLD US THAT PAKS SOUGHT TO BE FORTHCOMING TO SATTAR'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL PLACES FOR MALDIVIAN STUDENTS AT PAK EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS, AND THAT GOP AGREED TO ASSIGN HANDFUL OF TECHNICAL AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL TO MALDIVES IN LIMITED AID PROGRAM. HE SAID THAT SATTAR HAD PRESSED PAKS TO ROUTE PIA PLANES THROUGH MALE. PAKS REPLIED THAT AIRPORT IS TOO SMALL BUT PROMISED TO CONSIDER POSSIBILITY UPON COMPLETION RUNWAY EXTENSION PROJECT, WHICH MEHDI RECALLED WOULD COME ABOUT IN TWO YEARS. MEHDI SAID THAT SATTAR HAD ASSURED PAKS THAT THEY WERE NOT SEEKING REPLACEMENT FOR

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BRITISH MILITARY PRESENCE AT GAN BUT ONLY WANTED TO USE AIRPORT

THERE COMMERCIALLY. HE ALSO NOTED THAT PAKS UNDERSTOOD THAT INDIANS AND PERHAPS LIBYANS WERE SEEKING TO ESTABLISH PERMANENT MISSIONS IN MALE. ASKED IF PAKS MIGHT FOLLOW SUIT IF INDIANS GO IN, MEHDI STRESSED GOP'S LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES BUT DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY.

3. PRESS REPORTED THAT SATTAR HAD TOLD PAK FINMIN THAT DELEGATION OF MALDIVIAN BUSINESSMEN WAS EXPECTED TO VISIT PAKISTAN IN SEPTEMBER TO EXPLORE FURTHER TRADE TIES. COMMENTING GENERALLY ON PAK-MALDIVIAN COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, MEHDI NOTED THAT DIFFICULTY HAS BEEN THAT MALDIVIANS ARE REALLY TOO POOR TO DO MUCH IN THIS AREA, AND CITED SEVERAL INSTANCES WHEN THEY HAD TO RENIG ON CONTRACTS FOR PAK SUPPLIES (E.G. RICE) BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T RAISE THE MONEY.

BYROADE

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